DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 600 SO 023 218

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TITLE Leadership in the Social Studies.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 8p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Leadership; *Social Studies; *Staff Development; *Teacher Workshops

ABSTRACT

This paper suggests that leadership is needed to assist teachers in doing an excellent job of teaching social studies. The principal or supervisor must provide the necessary leadership. This leader needs to observe teaching and learning situations frequently in the classroom setting. Teaching suggestions are provided by the leader to teachers so that pupils more fully attain the objectives of instruction in the social studies. To be a leader, one needs knowledge and experience, as well as appropriate attitudes to modify, revise, and improve the present methods. Staff development is a salient item to stress in updating the social studies. The leader may survey social studies teachers to determine what should be stressed in staff development. If a new curriculum is being proposed for the school, the leader must: (1) present it meaningfully to teachers; (2) answer questions in a clear, concise manner; (3) respect the thinking of participants; (4) invite discussions and active participation; and (5) try to improve communication among leaders and faculty. Workshop methods to improve the social studies are quite effective if quality procedures are used. Five themes are suggested around which to base a workshop. Sample problems pertaining to one of the sample themes are listed. Workshops need to be appraised by participants in terms of meeting teacher needs. Faculty meetings are recommended as beneficial to participants in improving the social studies. Teachers can provide feedback to the rest of the faculty on how well the teaching suggestions worked out in the classroom. (DK)

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Leadership in the Social Studies

by

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LEADERSHIP IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

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Each pupil must attain optimally in the social studies. Teachers need to guide learners to achieve quality objectives. Learning opportunities for pupils should be selected by teachers which provide for individual differences and guide each learner to achieve as much as possible. Quality appraisal procedures should be in the offing to determine how much pupils have learned.

Leadership is needed to assist teachers to do an excellent job of teaching social studies. The principal or supervisor must provide the necessary leadership.

Providing Leadership in the Social Studies

The school leader be it the principal or supervisor needs to observe teaching- learning situations frequently of teachers in the classroom setting. The leader must praise teachers for doing a good job of teaching. Praise for quality teaching can spur teachers on to greater efforts. Teaching suggestions are provided by the leader to teachers so that pupils more fully attain the objectives of instruction in the social studies. The leader becomes a catalyst for improving the social studies curriculum.

To be a leader, one needs to possess expert power in that knowledge, experience, and attitudes are there to modify, revise, and improve what is presently being done. Rewards for good teaching are then in the offing in terms of deserved praise. The leader knows how to reward and which approaches to use to reinforce that which is positive. All teachers should then have ample opportunities to be rewarded due to emphasizing excellence in teaching the social studies. The leader too is able to suggest learning activities to teachers in a non- threatening way. These activities and teaching suggestions reflect the professional

repertoire and knowledge base of the leader. Learning opportunities guide pupils to achieve objectives in the social studies. Which procedures might the leader of the social studies curriculum use to guide teachers to optimalize learner attainment?

Leadership and the Social Studies

Staff development is a very salient item to stress in updating the social studies. Problems salient to teachers need to be identified and solutions sought. The leader may survey social studies teachers to determine that which should be stressed in staff development. From the survey, problems common to teachers provide a basis for emphasizing staff development. The writer has supervised student teachers for nearly 30 years. In speaking to teachers in these public schools, the following problems are mentioned most frequently in teaching the social studies;

1. Teaching for outcomes rather than processes.
2. Using an integrated team to teach pupils in which social studies and each academic discipline therein becomes fused and correlated.
3. Emphasizing the use of criterion referenced tests (CRT's).
4. Stressing pupil- teacher planning of objectives, learning opportunities, and appraisal techniques.
5. Implementing project methods of instruction.

Teachers may volunteer to serve on a committee to solve one of the identified problems listed above. Adequate reference materials need too be available to participants in staff development programs. Consultant assistance should be in the offing to guide problem solving activities. Progress reports may be given from each committee to others within appropriate intervals of time. Conclusions reached should be tried out in the regular classroom. Teachers who try out the new ideas need to discuss within staff development programs how well the new procedures worked out and suggestions need to be given to make necessary modifications.

If a new curriculum is being proposed for the school, the leader

must

1. present it meaningfully to teachers.
2. answer questions raised in a clear, concise manner.
3. respect the thinking of participants.
4. invite discussions and active participation.
5. try to improve communication among leaders and faculty.

New curricula should not be forced upon teachers. Acceptance of ideas by involved faculty is a must.

Workshop methods to improve the social studies have been quite effective if quality procedures are used. A social studies workshop must have a theme. The following themes have been used in workshops observed by the writer;

1. using learning stations in teaching- learning situations.
2. creative writing in the social studies.
3. emphasizing art work in the social studies.
4. developing readiness for reading content.
5. organizing the social studies to optimalize pupil achievement.

Once the theme has been decided upon, workshop participants in a general session need to identify problem areas to solve. Pertaining to the theme of using learning stations, the following problems were selected by participants;

1. how are the diverse stations introduced to pupils so they have an inward desire to participate actively in sequential learning activities?
2. what is the role of the teacher when learning stations are in evidence?
3. When should the teacher intervene in guiding pupil achievement to emphasize time on task?
4. which procedures should be used to assess pupil achievement at the diverse stations?
5. can tasks at the stations be developed cooperatively between pupils and the social studies teacher?

At a workshop, there needs to be standards to assist teachers in working effectively on a committee. These standards could include participants staying on the topic being pursued, respecting the thinking of others, and being conscientious in quality of ideas presented. Adequate reference materials and consultant assistance should be in the offing. Progress reports may be given by each committee to others participating in the workshop. The writer has noticed how interested committee members can be in progress being made by other committees. Mutual sharing of ideas between and among committees is recommended highly in the workshop setting.

In addition to the general session and committee endeavors, participants should also have ample opportunities to work on a problem on an individual basis. Thus participants individually have chosen areas for study such as the following:

1. how to work effectively with pupils who are participating in committee endeavors.
2. how too stress the addition of anthropology and sociology into social studies units.
3. How to implement portfolio methods of appraising learner performance.
4. how to assist mainstreamed mentally retarded pupils in the social studies.
5. how to maintain a quality learning environment when project methods of instruction are being used.

Social studies teachers may perceive individual endeavors as being extremely worthwhile since the participant can now work on something that is perceived important individually.

Workshops need to be appraised by participants in terms of meeting teacher needs. A rating scale or checklist may be used together with an open ended procedure whereby participants can write in necessary comments. Results from the rating scale and the checklist should be used to improve future workshops.

Faculty Meetings and Staff Development

Faculty meetings can be quite beneficial to participants in improving the social studies. Agendas for faculty meetings should contain vital items to discuss, not trivia. All faculty and staff should have salient roles in determining that which should go into an agenda. Each needs to ask himself/ herself, "What do I believe should be an agenda item?" The agenda should be in the hands of participates two days before the faculty meeting. Thus participants have had ample opportunities to think about solutions to identified problem areas. One school that had a series of faculty meetings to improve the social studies had discussed the following with related solutions implemented in the classroom;

1. teachers with principal leadership identifying key concept and generalizations for pupils to attain.
2. guiding pupils to read with greater meaning and understanding from the basal social studies textbook.
3. using a variety of reference sources in the classroom.
4. helping pupils to use software and other technology more effectively in teaching- learning situations.
5. assisting learners to perceive purpose in learning.

In classrooms, teachers should have ample opportunities to try out relevant ideas discussed in faculty meetings. A relevant point here is to have teachers provide feedback to the rest of the faculty on how well the teaching suggestions worked out in the classroom.

In Conclusion

Inservice education is a must for all participants in the school setting. Teachers, principals, and supervisors need to update the social studies curriculum rather continuously. Pupils need guidance and direction to attain the best possible objectives. They should experience learning opportunities that are meaningful, interesting, and provide for

optimal growth on the part of each pupil.